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1. In considering whether the Soviet Union is likely to begin a preventive war against the West, German Communist circles begin with a definition of preventive war as an offensive military action to be taken by the U.S.S.R. itself (as distinguished from the satellites) with the full knowledge that it will start a general war, for the avowed purpose of anticipating offensive military action by the United States.
2. The Warsaw Peace Conference stated in its Magna Carta of Peace, point 4: "We deem it necessary to declare that no political, strategic, or economic viewpoints, no development of the internal situation or of an internal conflict in one state can justify armed intervention by another state. Aggression is a criminal act of a state which is the first to commit an armed force against another state, no matter under what pretext." The interpretation of aggression, proposed by the Soviet delegation to the Peace Conference, represents a significant departure from Lenin's theory of just and unjust war, which was expounded only recently by Andrei Vyshinsky before the United Nations; according to Lenin, an aggressive war can be a just war, whereas under the Warsaw formula this is impossible. The prevailing view among SED functionaries, who have noted this discrepancy, is that the Warsaw formula constitutes a constructive application of the Bolshevik theory of war to a situation where no other state in the world except the United States could conceivably be expected to resort to warfare.
3. Within SED circles it is thought unlikely that the United States will use the atomic bomb or attempt to widen the scope of the present conflict, because American imperialism, faced with a setback in Korea and with the surge of the organized peace movement (as exemplified at Warsaw) is now afraid of the peace-loving nations. It is inconceivable that the U.S.S.R. will start a preventive war, which would precipitate a new world war, since the desire of the Soviet Union for peace is genuine.

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This document is hereby regraded to CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the letter of 16 October 1978 from the Director, Central Intelligence Agency, and the President of the United States.

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4. The possibility of the defeat of the working classes is never taken into account by the German Communists. No functionary versed in Leninist-Stalinist theory would mention it, let alone advance it as a reason for waging a preventive war. According to Stalin's dictum, World War III will spell the end of imperialism in the whole world. Stalin maintains that world imperialism is growing progressively weaker and that differences between mother countries and their colonies as well as between imperialists and the working classes of the world are increasing in severity. The possibility of the defeat of the working classes is thus ruled out.
5. The SED views an American surprise attack as a distinct and ever-present possibility, though not as a probability. To the present all attempts by American imperialists to start a general war have been frustrated by the consistent peace policy of the U.S.S.R. The Americans are afraid and for this reason have not resorted to the atomic bomb. The official SED propaganda line is therefore consistently to maintain that the preservation of peace depends upon developing the organized peace front to such a level of efficiency that the provocation of war by the United States will be impossible.* According to the theory of general crisis, the day is not far off when American imperialism will no longer be equipped economically or militarily to start a war. The most recent events in eastern Asia have already precluded the possibility of waging a two-front war against the Soviet Union.
6. A good Communist never avowedly copies the fighting methods of his class foes. Though the Americans may use the atomic bomb as a preventive measure, Communist propaganda does not suggest the Communists should also consider such a course of action. To do so would be a most serious transgression of the principle of stern partisanship which prohibits the drawing of any comparisons whatever between the democratic camp and the class foe.
7. Not even in the context of Lenin's theory of just and unjust war is there mentioned a preventive war started by the U.S.S.R. The resolutions of the Warsaw conference in particular have stilled apprehensions that the U.S.S.R. might follow such a course. The main topic of discussion among the German Communists is the aggressiveness of U.S. imperialism.
8. No attempt is being made to prepare the masses for the possibility of a preventive war begun by the Soviet Union. The U.S.S.R. realizes that even in SED circles it does not yet enjoy unquestioning confidence. To instill faith in the infallibility of Stalin and the CPSU(b) has been the unceasing endeavor of the U.S.S.R. since 1945. Great strides have already been made, and once this blind faith has been engendered, even a preventive war would need no explanation.

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* Comment: In the light of this premise should be viewed the statement by Otto Grotewohl at the Karl Marx Academy on 19 December 1950 that "Each day we succeed in preventing war brings us closer to peace."

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